



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
AIR EDUCATION AND TRAINING COMMAND

October Fall/Winter 2009

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL MILITARY RETIREES, SPOUSES, AND SURVIVING SPOUSES

FROM: Retiree Activities Office
82 TRW/CVR
419 G Avenue, Suite 1
Sheppard AFB TX 76311-2941

SUBJECT: *Retiree Update*

1. The *Retiree Update* is an unofficial publication written, edited and published by the Sheppard Retiree Activities Office for the convenience of the Sheppard AFB retired population. The information or comments herein do not necessarily represent the positions or opinions of the DoD, the USAF, AETC or the 82d Training Wing. While all efforts have been made to assure the accuracy of the information in this publication, no absolute guarantee of accuracy can be given nor should any be assumed.

2. Have a new address or an address change? Please notify the below addresses immediately:

a. Retirees: Defense Finance and Accounting Service, US Military Retirement Pay, PO Box 7130, London KY 40742-7130, Ph. 1-800-321-1080, FAX 1-800-469-6559

b. Annuitants: Defense Finance and Accounting Service, US Military Annuitant Pay, PO Box 7131, London KY 40742-7131, Ph. 1-800-321-1080, FAX 1-800-469-6559

c. Addresses for non Air Force military retirees are received periodically from parent services. Changes made locally are provided to the printer as information is made available from those services. Retirees and annuitants may also update addresses at the Pay Center's Website: www.dod.mil/dfas/money/retired

3. In this issue . . .

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JAMES ESTHER, JR., MSgt, USAF, Retired
Director, Retiree Activities Program

MICHAEL F. HAKE, Colonel, USAF
Vice Commander

Sheppard AFB

HANGAR HOLIDAY

2009 B•a•z•a•a•r

Saturday, Nov 14, 9 am - 6 pm
Sunday, Nov 15, 12 pm - 5 pm

Unique Arts, Crafts, Wreaths, Coins, Quilts, Collectibles, Military Items,
Baskets, Dolls, Pottery, Jewelry, Food, & Much...Much...More

Appearance from Santa Claus

Proceeds benefit Scholarships, Air Force and Local Charities.

**Over
220 Vendors!**



Hangar 1045

Open to the Public
FREE ADMISSION!

82D TRAINING WING

WING CHAPLAIN -- Colonel Richard M. Hartwell

All retirees are welcome to participate in the many worship and religious education and youth activities provided by our chapel communities. Please call us at 940-676-4370 or stop in at our administrative office in the South Chapel for the exact times and locations. Additionally, this summer's PCS season has brought five new staff members—four chaplains and one chaplain assistant—to our Sheppard Chaplain Corps team. They're eager to meet you and help you lend your gifts to our chapel family. Retirees are also encouraged to help us produce "Operation Thanksgiving" on Thanksgiving Day by inviting Airmen in training to share your Thanksgiving celebration! Call us if you're interested.

WING STAFF JUDGE ADVOCATE (SJA) -- Colonel Mark C. Garney

Ask a Military Attorney Your Legal Assistance Questions.

Q: Burial and funeral arrangements can be burdensome and expensive. Are there any programs to help alleviate this burden on my family?

A: Yes. Eligible veterans can receive a gravesite in a national cemetery, opening and closing of the grave, perpetual care, a government headstone/marker, burial, and presidential memorial certificate at no cost to the family. Additionally, some veterans can also receive burial allowances. You can find details on the Veterans Affairs (VA) Web site at www.cem.va.gov.

Q: What can I do to make arrangements for these programs?

A: While you generally cannot reserve a national cemetery gravesite in advance, you can significantly reduce the amount of work required if you discuss your desires in advance and collect your military records including your discharge papers. At the time of need, your family will have to ask the funeral home to contact the national cemetery where you wish to be buried and provide your military information.

Q: Am I entitled to any military honors at my funeral?

A: Yes. The Department of Defense provides military honors to all eligible service members at their funeral. At a minimum, these honors include at least two uniformed members with at least one from the deceased's service, burial flag folding and presentation, and the playing of Taps.

Q: How do I arrange for military honors at my funeral?

A: The deceased's next of kin must request the funeral director to contact the Department of Defense. The Department of Defense can be reached at 1-877-MIL-HONR (645-4667) or online at www.militaryfuneralhonors.osd.mil. Planning in advance before you are laid to rest is an important thing to do. Military legal offices can help you make such plans and ensure they are executed properly.

Q: How can I get in touch with you to set up an appointment?

A: You can contact the Sheppard Law Center at 940-676-4262 to set up an appointment or contact your closest legal assistance office.

WING COMPTROLLER -- Lt Col Timothy Landvogt

Save a trip to your nearest Finance Office:

Did you know that you can handle all of your retired pay needs without driving to the nearest finance office? With a MyPay Personal Identification Number (PIN), you can go online and review your pay, print your 1099R, and handle most other paycheck needs. If you don't have a MyPay PIN you can go to your nearest finance office and be set up with one in minutes. Then sign on to: <https://mypay.dfas.mil> to review your retired pay statements or make changes from the comfort of your own computer. If you don't have a computer, don't worry, your nearest AF Finance Office is still there to provide you with service. Most even have customer computers available to allow you to get a PIN and log on while you are in the office.

While our goal is to make your pay more accessible and private just for you, 82 CPTS is still available for one-on-one service to answer inquiries, assist with MyPay, reset MyPay PINs, and work retired pay issues with DFAS-London. For those in this area, we look forward to continuing as your finance office of choice.

WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE -- Mr. George Woodward

On 27 August 2009, the 82d Training Wing Public Affairs Office ushered in a new era in the way it communicates with all of its audiences with a newer and cleaner looking Web site. So what does the new site mean for you? The first two things are obvious—the site isn't cluttered and it's much easier to navigate with drop down menus. There's also a great feature in the middle of the page that cycles through our top/most recent articles. Another great feature is the ability for you to provide immediate feedback with comments on the articles posted to the Web site. We are excited to provide you even better support and service through the new Sheppard Public Web Site. Please visit us soon at <http://www.sheppard.af.mil>.

WING HISTORY OFFICE -- Mr. George Strader

The Sheppard Air Force Base Heritage Foundation, a non-profit organization, continues to accept donations for the Heritage Center Air Park at Sheppard.

The Heritage Center at Sheppard AFB is ready to begin the final phase of its major renovation project which began in 2002 and was funded by Sheppard AFB and the local community. Retirees have a fantastic opportunity to contribute to this military and aviation extravaganza by making a tax deductible donation to develop an Air Park at the Heritage Center.

The Heritage Center, which is on the Texas historical registry, is a place where the past and future meet. Said to have hosted Amelia Earhart, Wiley Post, and Charles Lindberg, it is one of the first structures erected at Kell Field, Wichita Falls' first municipal airport. Since its doors opened in 2003, more than 28,000 visitors have enjoyed its rich military and aviation history. Additionally, the Heritage Center may be reserved for special events and has hosted over 500. It currently has 28 museum displays in three separate exhibit halls. The proposed Air Park located behind the Heritage Center will contain six bronze replica aircraft such as the F/A 22 "Raptor," F-16 "Falcon," F-4 "Phantom" and earlier aircraft. The F/A 22 "Raptor" is the first replica the Heritage Foundation plans to purchase to open the Air Park. An example of a bronze replica aircraft is located above.



Please join us in this phenomenal journey to preserve our aviation heritage by making a tax deductible donation to the Sheppard Air Force Base Heritage Foundation. All donations will be acknowledged with a receipt for tax purposes.

So far, we have received donation pledges from retirees ranging from \$100 to \$1,000! Please make all checks payable to Sheppard Air Force Base Heritage Foundation and mail to:

Sheppard Air Force Base Heritage Foundation
P.O. Box 1222
Wichita Falls TX 76307

82D MEDICAL GROUP -- Colonel Timothy L. Bray, Commander

Retiree at Cost Hearing Aid Program—Have you Heard??

The Retiree at Cost Hearing Aid Program (RACHAP) allows retired service members to purchase hearing aid(s) at DoD cost through the Sheppard AFB Audiology Clinic. Appointments for retirees are made when space is available, following the priority of active duty and active duty dependent care. Contact the Sheppard appointment line at 940-676-1847 to make your initial appointment. This program is not available for retiree dependents.

There are a minimum of four, separate appointments needed (these cannot be made same-day):

1. Hearing exam (or current exam by local audiologist within the last 6 months).
You may also need to see an ear, nose & throat (ENT) physician in addition to your hearing exam, depending on the audiologist's recommendations.
2. Hearing aid evaluation, in which the audiologist will then counsel you regarding the different types of hearing aid(s) available and those that best suit your needs.
3. Hearing aid fitting, in which the devices are programmed by the audiologist and you will learn how to use and care for them.
4. Thirty day follow-up.

After receiving your 30-day follow-up, routine follow-up appointments every 6 months to 1 year are recommended to discuss any problems you may experience. Annual hearing exams are also necessary to monitor your hearing status.

The hearing aids come with a manufacturer's warranty stating guidelines for replacement of damaged or lost hearing aids. The audiologist will advise you of the warranty information. Hearing aids no longer under warranty can be repaired or replaced for a fee.

Batteries and hearing aid accessories, such as tubing, are not part of this benefit. However, batteries are available from the Base Exchange and from sources in your local community.

For more information about RACHAP please visit www.militaryaudiology.org/rachap/state.html. While this Web site reflects that SAFB does not participate in this program that is incorrect, Sheppard does offer this program. If you have any questions on Sheppard's program, you may call the Audiology Clinic at 940-676-2143.

Emergency Care

If you have a medical condition that is a threat to life, limb or eyesight, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room. After receiving treatment, you (or someone acting on your behalf) should call your primary care manager (PCM) with the facility contact information and schedule any follow-up care as required.

Urgent Care

Urgent care is required for an illness or injury that is not life threatening, but might worsen or cause you to

suffer unnecessarily if not treated within the next 24 hours. Call 1-877-676-1847 to determine your course of action. A nurse is available during non-duty hours and may advise you on over the counter methods until the clinic re-opens or may direct you to an urgent care facility. If you are directed to an urgent care facility a referral will be generated for payment of this visit. ***If you self-refer to an urgent care facility without being directed, you may be held liable for the cost of that visit.*** After receiving treatment, you (or someone acting on your behalf) should call your PCM and schedule any required follow-up care.

Out of Area Urgent Care

Follow the steps listed above. Once you have been directed to an urgent care facility you may call Humana at 1-800-444-5445 for listings of TRICARE authorized urgent care facilities in your area.

Sheppard Clinic Hours

Normal Clinic Hours:	Monday – Friday, 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. (By appointment only)
Main Pharmacy:	Monday – Friday, 7:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Satellite Pharmacy:	Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Closed weekends, holidays, family days and
1st Thursday morning each month until 12:30 p.m. for training.

Health and Wellness Center (HAWC)

Interested in improving your overall health while at the same time enhancing your life? Well the Health and Wellness Center at SAFB may have the answer. Located within the Pitsenbarger Fitness Center, Bldg 540, 6th Ave, the HAWC is a one-stop shop for all of your health and wellness needs. Whether you are interested in fitness/nutrition or tobacco cessation, the HAWC has a program for you! Additionally, the HAWC provides educational opportunities for individuals interested in learning more about managing health conditions such as hypertension, high cholesterol and diabetes. HAWC staff also provide shoe/foot/gait analysis to help prevent future injury and to make your fitness program that much more enjoyable.

Hours of operation are Monday-Friday, 0730-1630. All programs/services are FREE of charge and a referral is not necessary. Please stop by anytime you are in the neighborhood or call 940-676-HAWC (4292) for additional information.

82D FORCE SUPPORT SQUADRON -- Major Robert A. Hoskins

CASUALTY ASSISTANCE/SURVIVOR BENEFIT (Ms Darla Daily, 82 FSS/FSMP)

Changes to Federal Tax Withholding:

Public Law 111-05, The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, was signed into law by President Obama on February 17th, 2009. This act authorized a tax credit for most workers including recipients of retired and annuity Pay. This tax credit reduced your federal withholding tax rates effective 1 Apr 09 for the payment of retired and annuity pay due on 1 May 09.

A limited number of people, including those who usually receive very small refunds, could in some situations owe a small amount rather than receiving a refund. Those who should pay particular attention to their withholding include: Those receiving retired or annuity pay, married couples with two incomes, individuals with multiple jobs, dependents, some Social Security recipients who work, and workers without valid Social Security numbers.

For retirees wishing to adjust your federal income tax withholding, you must submit a new W-4 at <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw4.pdf>. You may mail your completed W-4 to: Defense Finance and Accounting Service, U.S. Military Retired Pay, P.O. Box 7130, London KY 40742-7130 or fax to the new W-4 to 1-800-469-6559.

For annuitants wishing to adjust your federal income tax withholding, you must submit a new W-4P at <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw4p.pdf>. You may mail your completed W-4P to Defense Finance and Accounting Service, U.S. Military Annuitant Pay, P.O. Box 7131, London KY 40742-7131 or fax the new W-4P to 1-800-982-8459.

If you use MyPay to access your DFAS pay account online, then you can make these changes from any computer with Internet capability.

Or you may visit the Casualty Office and they will assist you in completing a new form and faxing it to DFAS. Please call Darla Daily for an appointment at 676-2984.

Special Survivors Indemnity Allowance (SSIA):

Effective 1 Oct 08, (1 Nov 08 pay date) any surviving spouse who has an offset to payments under the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) as a result of receiving Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) from the VA, including the surviving spouse of a member who died while serving on active duty, is eligible for the Survivor Indemnity Allowance (SSIA) each month. DFAS will automatically make payments, SSIA will be taxable, and payments are scheduled to terminate in February 2016. SSIA will be paid if SBP is totally or partially offset. Amounts will be paid as follows:

Effective 1 Oct 08 - \$50
Effective 1 Oct 09 - \$60
Effective 1 Oct 10 - \$70
Effective 1 Oct 11 - \$80
Effective 1 Oct 12 - \$90
Effective 1 Oct 13 and thereafter - \$100

Reporting Death of a Retiree: All retiree deaths may be reported directly to DFAS at 1-800-321-1080.

Air Force: 1-877-353-6807; Local 940-676-2984
Army: 1-800-626-3317
Coast Guard: 1-800-772-8724
Marines: 1-866-826-3628/1-800-847-1597
Navy: 1-800-368-3202

Reporting an Annuitant's Death: All annuitant deaths must be reported directly to DFAS at 1-800-321-1080.

Air Force still seeking special compensation claimants: According to the Mr. Rick Castro, Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC) program manager for the Air Force at the Air Force Personnel Center (AFPC), the approval rate of claims for CRSC is currently running 66 percent; however, the program is still not attracting a third of the number of people thought to be eligible.

The increase in claims for the CRSC pay that officials expected has just not happened. AFPC officials expected an increase in claims would occur when the benefit was expanded to include all combat or combat-related disabilities rated as service-connected by the Department of Veterans Affairs at 10 percent or higher.

The CRSC staff at AFPC believes the lack of participation may be because many retired Airmen have still not heard about the program, or perhaps people are confusing the CRSC criteria with that of Concurrent Retirement Disability Payments.

“When in doubt – apply,” said Mr. Castro. “It may very well be the key to receiving additional tax-free money. I encourage all who meet the basic eligibility criteria to apply and let the experienced staff make the decision.”

In determining eligibility, retired military members should answer the following questions:

- Am I receiving retired military pay?
- Do I have a compensable VA disability of 10 percent or higher?
- Is my retired military pay offset by VA disability payments (VA waiver)?

“If you answered ‘yes’ to those questions and have not submitted your CRSC claim, you must not need the money,” said Mr. Castro. “Having more money than you had yesterday is not a bad thing. It’s tax-free and could go a long way in funding the education of children, grandchildren, or any number of quality-of-life improvements.”

The CRSC staff has already processed over 37,000 Air Force claims since the program’s inception in 2003; however, this is just a drop in the bucket compared to the number of retirees still possibly eligible, said Mr. Castro. Data shows there are more than 200,000 members receiving Air Force retired pay who also receive 10 percent or greater VA disability compensation today. Even subtracting the 50,000 already under Concurrent Retirement Disability Pay, there are still 120,000 retirees who have not applied for CRSC.

Although CRSC specifically addresses “combat-related” disabilities incurred from armed conflict, retirees who developed disabilities from other than combat may also be eligible. Disabilities caused by exposure to Agent Orange, combat training, aircrew duties, simulated war exercises, parachuting and munitions demolition potentially qualify for compensation under this program.

Slipping and falling in an exercise or even during combat – if not caused by something related to combat, combat training, or an instrumentality of war – normally do not qualify for CRSC.

“That said, let our experts make the call,” Mr. Castro explained. “That way if you do not qualify and something in the law or Department of Defense CRSC policy changes in the future that could affect the prior decision, we will already have a claim and documentation, and can reassess a claim based on the new eligibility factors.”

The CRSC team needs a copy of any and all copies of a retiree’s Department of Defense Form 214 or retirement order. They also need copies of any VA rating decisions addressing the disabilities being claimed, and any other available documentation.

All military retirees apply for CRSC to their own branch of service using DD Form 2860, Claim for CRSC.

Air Force:

United States Air Force Personnel Center
Disability Division (DPPDC)
550 C Street West, Suite 6
Randolph AFB TX 78150-4708
Toll-free: 1-800-616-3775

Army:

Department of the Army
U.S. Army Physical Disability Agency
Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC)
200 Stovall Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22332-0470
Toll-free: 1-866-281-3254

Navy and Marine Corps:

Secretary of the Navy Council of Review Boards
Attn: Combat-Related Special Compensation Branch
720 Kennon Street SE, Suite 309
Washington Navy Yard, DC 20374-5023
Toll-free 1-877-366-2772

FORCE DEVELOPMENT (Ms. Donna Collins, 82 FSS/FSD – 676-4838)**Sheppard Library, Bldg 312, 676-6152**

Try a cup of Starbucks’ coffee from the Brew U coffee shop, a book from the latest best sellers at the library and relax. A copier and fax machine is also available. Have you tried their fried pies at Brew U? A computer class is offered on how to clean and speed up your computer. Contact Terry Kimbrough at 676-6152 for more information. If you are looking for a particular book and do not find it in the library, please stop by our desk since we have other locations we can look into for you.

SUSTAINMENT SERVICES (Ms. Gabrielle Perry, 82 FSS/FSV- 676-7429)**Food Services, Bldg 61, 676-2082**

All retirees and their families are authorized to eat Thanksgiving and Christmas meals at a Sheppard AFB dining facility. For the Thanksgiving meal on Thursday, 26 November 2009, please join us at either the Sagebrush Dining Facility, building 1320, or the Tumbleweed Dining Facility, building 1368, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. For the Christmas meal on Friday, 25 December 2009, please join us at the Tumbleweed Dining Facility, building 1368, for lunch, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., or for dinner, from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

The Sheppard Club, Bldg 340, 676-6460

Bring a friend and stop by the Rustler’s Grill Tuesday - Friday between 10:45 a.m. and 1 p.m. for a tasty lunch. Let the Club help you with your special occasions by catering your events. From the table settings to the delicious dishes, everything will be just as you wish. All you have to do is send the invitations! Evenings each week at the Club include Taco Tuesday, TDY Night on Wednesday, Ladies’ Night on Thursday and First

Friday, an evening with a DJ or live singer and a free buffet on the second Friday of the month! Specials during the month include Latin Night, All You Can Eat Mexican Lunch Buffet, Grill it Your Way, Family Night, Texas Hold'em, Taste of Tuscany on Oct 23, and the Battle of the Bands and Halloween Bash on Oct 31. Check the Whirlwind or Web site www.sheppardservices.com for more information.

Pitsenbarger Fitness Center, Bldg 540, 676-0491

Kettlebell training classes will be coming to the Pitsenbarger Fitness Center! There are continual programs with aerobics, Race Across America and Climb Mt. Everest as well as professional trainers to keep you fit! We have a 1-mile track for walks and jogging. Pitsenbarger offers aerobics and the Levitow provides spinning classes.

Sheppard Annex at Lake Texoma, 903-523-4613

Get away from it all! Take advantage of our cozy cabins at Lake Texoma or find yourself an RV site or camping ground to help you unwind! Enjoy our moonlight cruises and the variety of boats to fish or cruise around the lake! We offer a Crappie House year around that is heated in the winter to meet your fishing needs. Our lodge offers comfort and relaxation and includes a seasonal snack bar, lounge, large color TV, VCR, fitness center and large natural stone fireplace.

Sheppard Inn, Bldg 1600, 676-4538

Needing places for your out-of-town family members this summer and don't have the room? Let us help you by providing a cozy, safe place to stay. Call us to reserve room space.

Sheppard AFB Honor Guard, Bldg 832, 676-4984

Have questions about military honors at a funeral?

Q: What type of paperwork is required to receive military honors?

A: DD Form 214 (Report of Separation from the Armed Service of the United States/Armed Forces of the United States Report of Transfer or Discharge)

Q: Who provides military honors for members of the different branches of Service?

A: The goal is for each branch of Service to provide all military honors for its own members; however, if needed, the different Service Honor Guards often augment each other to ensure military honors are provided, as appropriate. Also, the branches of Service may implement DoD guidance differently and may provide more than the minimum requirement as explained in the SJA article earlier in this newsletter.

Q: What types of military honors are rendered for retired Air Force personnel with 20 or more years of service?

A: These individuals will have a 7-person Honor Guard. Honors will include pallbearers, burial flag folding, playing of taps, a 2-person firing party (3 volleys), and flag presentation.

Q: Who should the funeral home contact?

A: The SJA article also explains procedures for the funeral home to follow in requesting military honors from the Department of Defense. If the funeral home has current contact information for the appropriate Service Base/Post Honor Guard, then the funeral home is authorized to contact the Base/Post Honor Guard. Base/Post Honor Guards are not authorized to speak directly to the deceased's family members. Arrangements for military honors must be coordinated NLT 48 hours prior to the interment.

COMMUNITY SERVICES (Ms. Cindy Perpich, 82 FSS/FSC- 676-4810)**The Auto Skills Center, Bldg 55, 676-4110**

Auto Skills is open to help you keep your car in good shape and perform a vehicle inspection for any car you are interested in buying. There are bays and stalls to rent with tools to borrow and professionals at your service. "Car Care 101" is held on the second Friday of the month to help you take care of your car.

South Bowling Center, Bldg 318, 676-7174

The South Lanes is holding the 9-Pin No Tap Handicap Tournament on October 3, 27 and 31. Bowl for a Buck is offered Monday to Friday from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and enjoy a lunch at Kegler's Café.

Community Center, Bldg 430, 676-4136

Interested in finding something fun to do? The community center is filled with a variety of programs that include stained-glass, knitting, basket weaving, dance classes, mixed martial arts, defensive driving, 3d Thursday scrapbooking and the theater group Sheppard Performing Arts Klub (SPArK) that provides special entertainment. Go online at www.sheppardservices.com to check on the classes that are available. Stop by the ceramics shop to look at over 2,500 craft projects to work on.

Information, Tickets and Travel, Bldg 430, 676-2302

Wanting to find a place to go? Stop by ITT in the Community Center for cruise information, discounts on flights and tickets for sporting events and some movie theaters here in town as well as brochures for various places to visit. Discover a unique experience with the Royal Caribbean Oasis of the Seas, an upcoming cruise next year and like no other! It will be the biggest ship on the seas with 7 themes that brings in Central Park, Coney Island, pool and sports zone to include just a few. Don't miss this opportunity!

Outdoor Recreation, Bldg 5, 676-4141

Outdoor Recreation provides a paintball field with rentable equipment, trap and skeet range, rental equipment for camping, picnics sports, home improvement and parties to name a few. The NAF ReSale Shop is located in the Outdoor Recreation building. Stop by and see what we have to offer! This facility offers horseback riding, wild hog hunt, fishing and canoeing trips throughout the year! Call our office, check the Whirlwind or our Web site for the latest information!

Wind Creek Golf Course, Bldg 4490, 676-6369

We offer a driving range and putting green with a new and improved grill for breakfast and lunch with a special every month. If you don't find something in our golf shop, let us know and we can special order for almost all vendors! We provide expert club repair to include re-gripping, re-shafting, checking and adjusting loft and lies.

SHEPPARD AFB COMMISSARY – Ms. Donna Romolton, Store Director

The commissary is your place to shop! If we can help you, please call us at (940) 676-2901.

We offer savings of over 30% on all your everyday grocery needs. The commissary carries fresh produce, USDA Choice Beef, an onsite bakery and deli, a sushi bar with chef, name brand groceries, and a wide assortment of health & beauty products. Did you know that you can special order items if you need large quantities? Just stop by our customer service dept and fill out a special order form. You can also special order fruit trays, meat trays, cheese trays and special cuts of meat. Just stop by the produce, meat or deli departments to place your orders. We also have a Value Center for even greater savings. What's a Value Center you ask?

Our Value Center is a section of the ware house that we use to offer items in bulk or family packs. The savings on some of these items can be up to 50%.

Value Center

Our value center is located in the warehouse thru the double doors between the chilled section and vitamin section. You will find club packs, specials and one time buys.

Club Packs are items that we carry that are in large sizes with big savings. Purchase all kinds of commodities such as detergents, paper products, snacks, diapers, health and beauty products, can goods, pet foods and more. Stop by our "Value Center" to take advantage of all these great deals.

DeCA is also a partner with TRICARE and DoD nutrition and medical professionals from all services in an effort to encourage military consumers to read labels and make healthier food choices to improve health and control weight. DeCA has joined TRICARE, Military One Source, the Army and Air Force Exchange Service, and Health and Human Services to ask the military community to "Take the Pledge" to help address the chronic issue of childhood overweight and obesity. At the TRICARE Get Fit Web site there are educational games for children, community resources and family tools available.

Store Hours

Normal Hours

Sun: 1100 – 1800
Mon: CLOSED
Tue: 0900 - 2000
Wed: 0900 - 2000
Thu: 0900 - 2000
Fri: 0900 - 2000
Sat: 0800 - 1800

Early Bird Hours

Sun: N/A – N/A
Mon: CLOSED
Tue: 0700 - 0900
Wed: 0700 - 0900
Thu: 0700 - 0900
Fri: 0700-0900
Sat: N/A – N/A

THE LUBBOCK/PANHANDLE AREA

Provided by the Lubbock Satellite Retiree Activities Office, Douglas G Carlson, Major, USA, Ret., Director

The Lubbock Satellite Retiree Activities Office was established to support the military retiree community in the Lubbock/Amarillo Panhandle area and is open Tuesday through Thursday from 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Since we are not located on a military post or base, we are mainly a referral station with volunteers who can advise you on how to get assistance and who can help with your questions or problems. That is our goal.

Our office would function better with one or two more military retirees or spouses. People from any branch of service are welcome. Our volunteers have a monthly get-together in the Plains National Bank (50th and University) Coffee Room. We discuss the month's activities and we talk about the information received from Air Force, Navy, and Army retiree newsletters; periodicals calls; and e-mail.

ID Cards can be renewed at the following facilities in West Texas:

Cannon AFB, 27th MSS/DPMPs, 110 Sextant Ave, Bldg 600, Room 2027, 505-784-2659

Dyess AFB, 7th MSS/DPMPs, 417 Third St., Bldg 417, Room 130, 915-696-2276

Navy/Marine Corps Reserve Center (NMCRC) Amarillo, 2500 Tee Anchor Rd., 806-372-5589

National Guard Center, Lubbock, 301 E Regis St., Room 125, 806-765-9529, ext 21

It is important to call before going to those locations to get answers to any questions you may have and to ensure their equipment is operational at the time you want to visit. In Lubbock, the scheduled time for ID card transactions is Monday – Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 11:03 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Contact Amos at the TRICARE Service Center, 5121A 69th Street, Lubbock, in person or call toll free, 1-888-363-5433, if you have questions about eligibility, coverage, pharmacy benefits, or claims. There is a TRICARE Service Center in the hospital/clinic area at Cannon AFB; however, Cannon is in the TRICARE Central Region (7 & 8), and the Texas Panhandle is in the Southwest Region (6). Some difficulty may be experienced in obtaining service from another region.

For information or assistance concerning military retiree affairs, contact the LSRAO by telephone at (806) 749-3728; FAX (806) 744-5702; e-mail: lsrao@door.net

TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION -- Abdullah Shamsid-Deen, Counselor
Key Texas State Legislature Veteran Bills Status: Update**100% Property Tax Reduction for 100% Disabled Veterans:**

On June 19, 2009, Texas Governor, Rick Perry signed into law House Bill 3613, which provides for the total exemption of property taxes for a qualified veteran's homestead property.

To qualify for this exemption, the property owner must qualify for a homestead exemption under Section 11.13 of the Texas Property Tax Code. (Check with your Appraisal District for more information on this). The veteran must have a United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) service-connected disability rating of 100% or be entitled to 100% disability due to unemployability. This means that a disabled veteran who receives from the VA 100 percent disability compensation due to a service-connected disability and a rating of 100 percent disabled or of individual unemployability is entitled to an exemption from taxation of the total appraised value of the veteran's residence homestead.

To apply for the exemption, the veteran will need to fill out an application and turn it in at the appraisal district office along with documentation supporting their disability rating from the VA. Since this exemption applies to the 2009 tax year, you should get your application in to the appraisal district office as soon as possible.

Scratch-off Lottery Ticket to Benefit the Fund for Veterans: Texas State Senate Bill (SB) 1655 (Relating to the organization, duties, and functions of the Texas Veterans Commission and to providing funding for assistance for veterans through a lottery game) passed the senate with the lottery amendment intact. On 1 June 09 the report was enrolled in the Senate. *Signed by Governor Perry on 19 June 09; the bill is now law.*

Texas State House Bill (HB) 4583 (Relating to the creation and re-creation of funds and accounts in the state treasury, the dedication and rededication of revenue, and the exemption of unappropriated money from use for general governmental purposes) was signed in the House 2 June 09 and has also been amended and passed to protect the lottery funds from being swept and allow transfer to the FVA. *Signed by Governor Perry on 19 June 09; the bill is now law.*

Voluntary Contributions to benefit the Fund for Veterans: SB 1940 (Relating to the fund for veterans' assistance, voluntary contributions to the Fund by State employees, and to the establishment of pretrial veterans court programs) has been signed in the House and the Senate. *Signed by Governor Perry on 19 June 09; the bill is now law.*

Mental Health for Veterans: SB 1325: Nelson: relating to the creation of a mental health intervention program. for military veterans. The bill was signed in the Senate on 5/28/09, signed in the House on 5/29/09. *Signed by Governor Perry on 19 June 09; the bill is now law.*

Restore Agent Orange Presumptive Diseases to “Blue Water” Navy Veterans: SCR 38: Memorializing Congress to restore the presumption of a service connection for Agent Orange exposure to veterans who served on the inland waterways, territorial waters, and in the airspace of the Republic of Vietnam Passed House and Senate; enrolled 5/30/09. *Signed by Governor Perry on 19 June 09.*

Provided by:
Abdullah Shamsid-Deen
Veterans Counselor
Texas Veterans Commission
426 5th Ave, Bldg 402, Room 234
Sheppard AFB TX

NICE TO KNOW ITEM (afdns@afpc.af.mil)

Release No. 07-05-09

July 29, 2009

New AMC Web site offers space-available travel info

by Mark Diamond
Air Mobility Command Public Affairs

SCOTT AIR FORCE BASE, Ill. (AFRNS) -- Air Mobility Command here recently unveiled its first official, command-level AMC Travel Web site.

People planning to travel the AMC military travel system can now point their Web browsers to www.a.m.c.af.mil/a.m.ctravel/index.asp <<http://lyris.dmasa.dma.mil/t/2246039/4650496/5885/0/>> for the latest in AMC travel information.

The site, which officially went live July 24, offers prospective space-available travelers a wealth of information, including an updated AMC passenger terminal contact list (complete with phone, e-mail and Web links), and more than a dozen travel documents, example letters and brochures.

Every day around the world, hundreds of military and military-contracted commercial aircraft travel the world delivering troops and cargo. And each year, hundreds of thousands of military personnel, retirees, and their family members go along for the ride, courtesy of the AMC space-available travel program.

Space-available flights, also known as "military hops," are a unique benefit to U.S. service members, retirees and their families. Under the AMC travel program., unused seats on U.S. military and military-contracted aircraft are made available to non-duty passengers on a space-available basis (once space-required or official-duty passengers and cargo have been accommodated).

According to one AMC travel expert, the AMC Travel Web site was created simply because "AMC customers deserve it."

"(The AMC Travel) site was created to provide our customers a wealth of AMC travel information, which can be counted on to contain the most accurate and up-to-date travel information available," said Tech. Sgt. Steve Katsonis of the AMC passenger policy branch. "Our customers deserved a Web site where they can obtain travel information that is correct, up to date and validated by AMC. This Web site will give them that."

Sergeant Katsonis said AMC officials understand the massive amount of anxiety and stress felt by space-required and space-available travelers.

"Our goal is that this site will answer any questions the passengers will have, therefore minimizing their stress before they leave their homes," he said.

In the past, prospective space-available passengers frequently turned to one of several AMC headquarters offices in search of travel information. Sergeant Katsonis said although headquarters personnel are trained to respond to these public queries, he hopes the new Web site will provide all their information and more. Additionally, he said trained passenger service agents at AMC terminals worldwide are standing by to assist. People searching for up-to-the-minute AMC travel information are encouraged to contact their nearest AMC passenger terminal. A current listing is available on the new AMC Travel site.

Another benefit of the new AMC Travel site is that it will be updated with the latest breaking news and updates. For instance, Sergeant Katsonis said active-duty dependent travel policies have gone through a few significant changes during the past few years.

He said Department of Defense officials now allow unaccompanied travel by dependents when the military spouse is deployed on contingency/exercise/deployment orders, also known as CED orders. According to Sergeant Katsonis, when the deployment is for 120 days or more, unaccompanied travel is authorized in category IV; and for deployments of 366 days or more, unaccompanied travel is authorized in the bottom of category III.

Sergeant Katsonis said he wants people to know that space-available travel is a great benefit, but it can be a stressful experience without the proper planning.

"AMC never guarantees travel, and passengers need to be prepared for their (space-available) trip to take more time than it would were they traveling commercial," the sergeant said.

He added that not every base is equipped with facilities or lodging capable of handling passengers stranded by a broken or rerouted aircraft.

"The most important thing to remember when traveling Space-A is be prepared to fly commercial if problems are encountered" Sergeant Katsonis said. "The key to a stress-free trip is to have a plan. Have enough money for all contingencies, and be mentally prepared for disappointment when plans don't come together." (Courtesy of AMC News Service)

Release No. 08-02-09
Aug. 5, 2009

Health care reform won't impact VA, Tricare

By Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON (AFRNS) -- In ongoing discussions about health-care reform, President Barack Obama offered assurance to those receiving medical care through Tricare or the Department of Veterans Affairs: Your benefits are safe.

Eligibility for health care under VA or Tricare "will not be affected by our efforts at broader health-care reform," President Obama told military reporters at the White House on Aug. 4.

President Obama said he also made that point clear after meeting with the American Legion's national commander, Dave Rehbein, and executive director, Peter Gaytan.

"I want to make sure that message gets out to our veterans," the president said. "I think it's very important to get the message out: If you are in the VA system and are happy with your care, great. We have no intention of changing your eligibility."

While a new, national program, will not force anyone to change health-care systems, President Obama said it could offer benefits or geographic convenience that might make some veterans elect to join it. A national program "will actually give them more choices, more flexibility," he said.

President Obama cited problems in U.S. health-care delivery systems, which he said cost more than other countries' programs and too often deliver less.

The VA "has probably made more progress than most systems out there in increasing quality" during the past 25 years, and could help shed light on better ways of delivering health care, he said.

But the cost of delivering that care is high even at VA, and Tricare consumes a big piece of the Defense Department's budget, he said.

With the fiscal 2010 budget reflecting the largest VA funding increase in 30 years, President Obama told American Legion leaders he is committed to ensuring that VA provides America's veterans the highest-quality health care possible.

Meanwhile, he told reporters VA will increase its outreach to more veterans to make sure they're aware of their medical benefits and other entitlements.

"Although there are hundreds of thousands of veterans who are using our services, we know there are hundreds of thousands more who may not know that benefits are available," he said.

"And we are working really hard to make sure that every single veteran -- not just our active force, but also National Guard and reservists -- are aware of the benefits that are available to them.

"Guiding them through that process, we think, is extraordinarily important."

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Greetings from your Retiree Activities Office

This is the last issue to be published for the year 2009. At this time of year, we look forward to all of the activities the Fall and Winter months offer us. Football heads the list as we pull for our favorite team hoping they will make the playoffs and become national champions. Then there is Veterans' Day, November 11, where we remember and honor our veterans who served and those who made the supreme sacrifice in order that we might enjoy the freedom that is ours. Thanksgiving Day, November 26, we give thanks for all we have been blessed to have and enjoy. Quite often we begin to think about, and prepare for the coming holiday season, the birth of the Christ Child, Christmas, buying and sharing gifts, traveling and visiting longtime friends, and New Year celebrations where we dress up in our formal attire (some of us) and welcome in the New Year. With all of the activities in mind, I will take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to the Commander, 82d Training Wing, Vice Commander, wing staff, "Team Sheppard" and all of our retiree volunteers for their outstanding support of the Sheppard Retiree Activities Program. This support has enabled us to have modern equipment and the ability to communicate both on and off base via e-mail, FAX and telephone (Commercial and Defense Switch Network (DSN) as well as official USPS mail (snail mail).

The retirees on our volunteer staff have contributed immeasurably to the successful operation of the Sheppard Retiree Program by giving unselfishly of their time. Sheppard operates Retiree Activities Offices at two locations, Sheppard AFB and the Lt Gen William Edgar Murphy Armed Forces Guard/Reserve Center in Lubbock, Texas. All are volunteers. None are paid. We owe them a debt of gratitude. Please accept my personal thanks to the retirees who have joined our team since the last newsletter.

HOWEVER, WE CONTINUE TO NEED 5 VOLUNTEERS FOR EACH DAY OF THE WEEK

(excluding Saturday, Sunday and Holidays) for the RAO. This will allow our office staff to be on duty one day a month for 4 hours. The Retiree Activities Office is located in a relatively comfortable facility with two offices for conducting business and a very comfortable sitting area and break room that is shared with the Sheppard Government Employee Union. There are lots of pertinent reading materials for visitors' information and relaxation. The office is open Monday – Friday, 1000-1400 daily. Volunteer retirees are available during office hours to receive inquiries, give assistance to get people to where they need to be, to get what they need to get, to visit, to listen, etc. If you wish to volunteer with other on-base activities we will assist in placement. **Please contact me and be a part of this rewarding experience.**

Since the death of our last editor of the Sheppard Retiree Newsletter, Major Sheldon L. Brown in 2004, we have not had a person who could solely focus on the newsletter, so I have done my best to wear that hat as well. Fortunately, I have now passed that hat and we welcome Colonel Beverly C. Wright, USAF, Retired, to our outstanding team of volunteers as the new editor for the Sheppard Retiree Newsletter. Her contact information is provided on page 19 so don't hesitate to call or e-mail her with questions on the newsletter or with suggestions on articles for your newsletter.

Retirees if you are considering downsizing and no longer have space to display your military memorabilia, please consider donating them to the Sheppard AFB Heritage Center. The Heritage Center is truly a place where the past and present meet. If you would like to pursue this great opportunity to preserve your military heritage and to share it with others, please contact Mr. George Strader, Sheppard Heritage Center Curator, at 676-2787.

According to folks at the Air Force Personnel Center, they have a new retiree Web page that “is the best thing since sliced bread!” So check it out and see if you agree with them. The Web address is www.retirees.af.mil.

In closing, I extend a sincere wish for a wonderful Thanksgiving, a Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy, and prosperous New Year.

Sincerely,

James Esther, Jr., MSgt, USAF, Retired
Director, Retiree Activities Program

Persons desiring information or assistance and/or further clarification of items contained in this newsletter should contact the Sheppard Retiree Activities Office:

Commercial: 940-676-5088/3381
DSN: 736-5088/3381
FAX No. Commercial: 940-676-8444 DSN: 736-8444
E-mail: Director - james.esther@sheppard.af.mil

Web Site Address: <http://www.sheppard.af.mil>

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RETIREE UPDATE OCTOBER Fall/Winter 2009

CONTAINS IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Sheppard AFB Hangar Holiday

Saturday, November 14, 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Sunday, November 15th, 12 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Proceeds benefit scholarships, Air Force and local charities.